The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

1.-13.   (canceled)

14.   (currently amended) A [patch image preparation] method for [preparing] determining a position of arrangement of a patch in a patch image, comprising:

a setting step, of setting kinds of patches included in the patch image in response to an instruction by a user;

a selection step, of selecting an arrangement patch from the patches set in said setting step;

a determination step, of determining an arrangement nonpermission area of the arrangement patch based on the position of the already arranged patch; and

an arrangement step, of arranging the arrangement patch in an area other than the arrangement nonpermission area,

wherein said patch image preparation method causes execution of said selection step, said determination step, and said arrangement step to all the patches set in said setting step.

15.   (currently amended) The patch image preparation method according to claim 14, wherein the arrangement nonpermission area includes an area in which the

patch has already been arranged and an area which is set based on a patch highly correlated with the arrangement patch and which highly correlates with the arrangement patch.

16.　(currently amended) The ~~patch image preparation~~ method according to claim 15, wherein the area which highly correlates with the arrangement patch is an area which has predetermined widths, respectively, in a main scan direction and a sub-scan direction.

17.　(currently amended) The ~~patch image preparation~~ method according to claim 14, wherein[[,]]

said setting step includes setting a number of same patches to be arranged, and

said patch image preparation method includes repeating said selection step, said determination step, and said arrangement step on the basis of the number set in said setting step.

18.　(currently amended) The ~~patch image preparation~~ method according to claim 14, wherein, when the arrangement patch cannot be arranged in the area other than the arrangement nonpermission area, the arrangement patch is arranged within the arrangement nonpermission area.

19.   (currently amended) A program for performing, by a computer, a ~~patch image preparation~~ method for ~~preparing~~ determining a position of arrangement of a patch in a patch image, said method comprising:

a setting step, of setting kinds of patches included in the patch image in response to an instruction by a user;

a selection step, of selecting an arrangement patch from the patches set in said setting step;

a determination step, of determining an arrangement nonpermission area of the arrangement patch based on the position of the already arranged patch; and

an arrangement step, of arranging the arrangement patch in an area other than the arrangement nonpermission area,

wherein said ~~patch image preparation~~ method causes executing said selection step, said determination step, and said arrangement step to all the patches set in said setting step.

20.   (canceled)

21.   (New) The method according to Claim 14, wherein the patch image is used to judge a color reproduction characteristic of an output device of outputting said patch image.

22. (New) An apparatus for determining a position of arrangement of a patch in a patch image, comprising:

a setting unit, adapted to set kinds of patches included in the patch image in response to an instruction by a user;

a selection unit, adapted to select an arrangement patch from the patches set by said setting unit;

a determination unit, adapted to determine an arrangement nonpermission area of the arrangement patch based on the position of the already arranged patch; and

an arrangement unit, adapted to arrange the arrangement patch in an area other than the arrangement nonpermission area,

wherein said apparatus causes execution of said selection unit, said determination unit, and said arrangement unit to all the patches set by said setting unit.